



L. S. Vygotsky

1896-1934 • Russian psychologist • Interested in the human "mind," not just behavior

Vygotsky's theories:

- 1) Children learn new skills, and thereby reach new levels of development, through the **interaction with and imitation of others**.
- 2) **Language** is the primary tool by which new knowledge is passed from the social context to the individual, and therefore is an essential part in the **development of problem-solving and critical thinking skills**.
- 3) The most effective learning takes place in the **Zone of Proximal Development**, the level at which a skill is too difficult for a child to master on his/her own, but that can be done with guidance and encouragement from a knowledgeable person.

Social Constructivism:

An effective classroom allows for

EXPLORATION and **COLLABORATION**.

Implications for Educators:

- **Allow students to share and discuss ideas with one another**
- **Provide opportunities to use problem-solving skills in "real-world" situations**
- **Treat incorrect answers as opportunities to promote new learning through discussion and dialog**
- **Encourage students to investigate, explore, and enjoy the learning process**
- **Activities should:**
 - **Be novel; get the students' attention**
 - **Allow for creativity and originality**
 - **Be at the appropriate level (Zone of Proximal Development)**
 - **Act as a means of learning skills that will apply in other situations, and not the end in and of themselves**